

Hello. I'm a working audio engineer, mostly in the live arena, but I work in recording, as well.

I have worked for over thirty years in one aspect of this industry, or another, including working as:

FOH AE

Radio Talent (College and Commercial)

Recording AE

Lead Vocalist (Live and Recording)

I've written several songs, none of which have seen the light of day or been picked up by a major label or distributor or publisher.

Regardless of that, I am presently working on a CD release of my own work.

I mix over 270 shows a year.

I have worked with regional artists who have proffered their discs and promotional materials to local radio stations in the N. OH and SE. MI areas. They are of the opinion, as am I, that for the most part; local radio is pretty much a joke, anymore. Huge conglomerates, like.. oh, let's say: Clear Channel Communications, Inc. have eaten radio alive and reduced it to a handful of genre-based target markets to which they stream programming via satellite. There is the obligatory, morning drive time "talent" replete with toilet humour, but for the most part, radio seems to be a closed shop that promotes nothing but the notion that advertisers would be wise to make huge blocks of advertising buys from Clear Channel.

As far as serving the local music community.... It's a joke.

Your mileage may vary.

Somebody should do SOMETHING, in my humble opinion, to try and revive the notion that local programming IS radio.

If I want to listen to a specific genre of music all day, I can do that on XFM or Dish Network Satellite feeds.

Without a speck of filler or commercials, I might add.

If the FCC continues to rely on market forces to foment local radio programming, it is my opinion that Clear Channel Communications, et al, will wag the poor dog to death by it's tail, and we will end up with a loop of 12 songs, played endlessly and alternated with a loop of 24 commercials.

Local programming should include:

Local artists and provide airtime for their work.

Local personalities.

Local advertising buys at a cheaper rate.

Disc jockeys ACTUALLY PLAYING MUSIC THAT THEY PICK OR IS REQUESTED. A monkey can press a button on a satellite feed. Repeatedly, if necessary.

Profiles of locally based artists who have succeeded nationally or

internationally.

All local programming? I don't know. Local programming gave radio it's aspects of local flavour and it's diversity, as well, for many years. It surely couldn't hurt to stop wagging the dog, could it?

Programming featuring local artists.

Local news call-in shows.

Locally based PSA's.

Any show where the disc jockey is local, plays SONGS THAT ARE REQUESTED, and can pick their own discs from ANY genre of ANY era that they please, or is asked for by listeners who call in.

College feeds in a commercial format could be interesting.

I'm not a program director, but I would like stations to start using them, again, as opposed to a cable from the wall that gets pre-programmed feeds from New York City, and then tosses the locals a bone with the time and temperature.

That's something useful to the community and good publicity, but it's simply community good will promotion. That's fine. It's NOT entertainment or local programming.

Payola has always existed, only now, media giants have found a way to write it off as "billback" for non-existent marketing services.

Payola is never going to go away at the level at which it now operates, because it isn't a fifty in the record jacket for the Dee Jay, or a free dinner, this time. It's HUGE amounts of money being traded between major labels and major media outlets.

Huge.

Getting that steak away from those dogs is going to be almost impossible.

Voice tracking is another way of saying "Shut up and eat your lunch" both to the on air talent and the listeners in local markets, from a huge, ugly company that has come very close to killing the beast that they're riding, I think. It's not only insulting, it's unforgivably bland.

I think the FCC SHOULD directly regulate this process. I think the FCC should tell these people, who utilise this approach, to go to hell, frankly.

As to the question of "national playlists" my above stated opinions on "Voice Tracking" cover that issue pretty succinctly.

Should stations be required to play a certain percentage of local content?

YES.

LPFM is probably one of the last bastions of real radio. They offer local flavour and ethnic diversity and well as a diversity of genres of music played.

I think that's called "serving the public interest."

Clear Channel Communications and their ilk have, in my opinion, turned American radio broadcasting into a shallow, plastic wading pool where nothing - that actually might bring a breath of fresh air - can live.

It's loud, over-compressed, piped in from the same place and... while some might pronounce it "slick", I prefer the term "oily."

Thank you.